

OBTAINING MEDICAL SUPPORT FROM MILITARY PERSONNEL

Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS)

DEERS is the Defense Enrollment and Eligibility Reporting System. It maintains information on the military service person, known as the “sponsor,” and dependents entitled to TRICARE medical benefits. DEERS is the database used to confirm eligibility for health care benefits through the military.

TRICARE Standard

The standard health care benefit is referred to as **TRICARE Standard**. It is not an insurance program. It is an entitlement. No premiums are charged for enrollment, and no additional enrollment by the military member (sponsor) is required; however, there is a deductible and cost share associated with this entitlement.

TRICARE Prime

In addition, in most areas of the country, the military member (sponsor) also has the option of enrolling some or all family members into a program referred to as **TRICARE Prime**. An actual enrollment form must be completed (with the sponsor’s signature) and submitted to the TRICARE Enrollment Office. Under certain circumstances, the custodial parent may enroll the child in TRICARE Prime. In some cases, there are premium payments required depending on the military member’s status (i.e., quarterly premiums for family members of retirees). This program is similar to a civilian health maintenance operation (HMO) policy. There is no deductible, but there is a co-payment required for some services. Specific information about these alternative coverage options may be found at www.tricare.osd.mil.

The process for obtaining medical support from a military parent is described below. The process is applicable to active duty or retired military. Reservists are not eligible for TRICARE.

How to Enroll

Before any enrollment can occur, the child must be determined to be a military dependent in order to be enrolled in DEERS. (See the next section on how to determine eligibility.) The documents needed to establish dependency include a court-ordered paternity

determination (if the child's parents were not married) and a birth certificate. The court order only has to establish paternity; it does not have to order child or medical support. However, an order for medical support and evidence of medical coverage are required for a State CSE agency to count the case on the OCSE 157 Report.

Each branch of the service may have slightly different procedures. The custodial parent (CP) must go to the nearest RAPIDS ID Card Issuing Activity and present the appropriate documents to the verifying officer. (RAPIDS stands for Real-Time Automated Personnel Identification Card System and refers to the application process through which individuals receive ID cards.)

Location of the nearest RAPIDS ID Card Issuing Activity may be found via the Internet at <http://www.dmdc.osd.mil/rs/owa/home>. If Internet access is not available, the custodial parent may contact the DMDC Support Office telephone center help line Monday through Friday between 9:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. (ET) at (800) 538-9552.

A custodial parent wishing to enroll by mail should contact any military installation with a RAPIDS ID Card Issuing Activity for further assistance. Documentation to prove dependency must be provided. One requirement for enrollment is the Social Security number (SSN) of the noncustodial parent (NCP)/military member. If the custodial parent does not know the NCP's SSN, the child support caseworker could obtain the NCP's SSN and complete all the required paperwork to initiate the enrollment. The caseworker would fax or mail the paperwork to the appropriate RAPIDS ID Card Issuing Activity. The CP will need to take the child to the ID Card Issuing Activity to obtain a military ID card for the child. All the paperwork must be completed and approved prior to the CP's appearance at the ID Card Issuing Activity. This is an example of a procedure that the local child support office would need to work out with their corresponding ID Card Issuing Activity.

Before the DEERS enrollment can be completed, an attempt will be made to have the sponsor sign the paperwork. The amount of time for this process will vary depending on the location and the assignment of the military member. If the sponsor is unwilling to sign, the verifying official may sign on behalf of the sponsor after all efforts to obtain the sponsor's signature have failed and those efforts have been documented. The sponsor may not decline coverage of his/her child.

Once enrolled in DEERS, the child is eligible to receive medical care in two ways. The child may be able to obtain medical care and medications from military hospitals and clinics. The child may also use the cost share medical coverage, TRICARE, with civilian health providers. Getting health care from a uniformed service hospital or clinic, when available, saves money and paperwork. Military bases have Beneficiary Counseling Assistance Coordinators to assist custodial parents with questions about medical coverage.

TRICARE uses the term "shared" rather than "covered" because the cost is shared by the beneficiary after an annual deductible cost has been satisfied. Claims to TRICARE may be submitted up to a year after treatment. Commencement of military medical benefits is

determined by either the child's date of birth or the date(s) of the sponsor's military service, not the DEERS enrollment date.

A TRICARE handbook explaining coverage is available by writing or calling:

TRICARE Management Activity (TMA)
Public Affairs Branch
Aurora, CO 80045-6900
(303) 361-1000/1129

How to Learn Whether a Dependent Has Already Been Enrolled or is Entitled to TRICARE Benefits in DEERS

A legal dependent (one for whom paternity has been established) of a military person (active or retired) is eligible for TRICARE medical services through the Department of Defense. The recently implemented electronic match between the Federal Case Registry (FCR) and the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) enables child support workers to learn whether a dependent is eligible for TRICARE and already enrolled in DEERS. DMDC matches the FCR participants against its records to determine whether a child is eligible for military medical benefits. DMDC reports the results to the FCR, and the FCR transmits the match information to the States every quarter.

Once an active duty or retired military member and eligible family members have been enrolled in DEERS, they have medical benefits. These medical benefits do not include dental care. (TRICARE dental coverage may be available at an additional cost to the service member. TRICARE vision care varies according to beneficiary status and TRICARE program option.) The NMSN does not result in the automatic enrollment of the child in DEERS. The custodial parent must follow the procedures in the previous section for enrollment if the child is shown as eligible but not already enrolled in DEERS.

A custodial parent (not a child support worker) may confirm eligibility for a child by calling the **DMDC Support Office (DSO) telephone center help line at 800-538-9552**. If the custodial parent is divorced from the military personnel (sponsor) but has a prior DEERS record and can establish that he/she is the child's parent, DEERS can provide eligibility information. If the custodial parent was never married to the sponsor or was never enrolled in DEERS, he/she would first need to provide proof that the custodial parent is actually the parent of the child in question. Acceptable documentation would include a birth certificate for the child naming the parent, custody papers, etc. Documents would have to be sent to DSO to be reviewed and the tracking system updated before DSO could release specific information to the custodial parent.

No Need to Send the National Medical Support Notice for Active Duty and Retired Military

It is not appropriate to send the NMSN to DoD for active duty military personnel or retired military as the military health care coverage, TRICARE, is an entitlement to military personnel and their dependents. Because TRICARE is an entitlement and not

health insurance, DMDC cannot comply with the NMSN to enroll dependents. If the child's status in DEERS/TRICARE can be determined, this eliminates any need for IV-D agencies to send the NMSN to DMDC for a dependent of military personnel.

Child support enforcement agencies can determine whether a child is eligible to be enrolled in DEERS/TRICARE by the following means:

- By the appearance of an appropriate DoD Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN) on the new hire report or the quarterly wage report for either the noncustodial parent (NCP) or the custodial parent (CP) indicating that either parent is active duty military or retired military, or
- Through the DMDC/Federal Case Registry match.

Department of Defense FEINs:

- Army: Active Duty FEIN is 359990000
- Navy: Active Duty FEIN is 349990000
- Marine Corps: Active Duty FEIN is 539990000
- Air Force: Active Duty FEIN is 849990000
- Coast Guard: Active Duty FEIN is 529980000
- NOAA: Active Duty FEIN is 520821608
- Retired Military Pay: Retired FEIN is 340727612

If a child is determined to be eligible for enrollment, as indicated by the DMDC/FCR match or by the FEIN from the new hire report or the quarterly wage report, the CSE agency should instruct the custodial parent to contact the local RAPIDS ID Card Issuing Activity with the proper documentation to initiate the dependent's enrollment in DEERS/TRICARE. The CSE agency should indicate in the individual case record where it obtained the child's medical enrollment status and make appropriate case updates from the next quarterly DMDC/FCR match.

Sending the National Medical Support Notice to DoD Civilian Personnel

This policy explained above does NOT apply to DoD **civilian** personnel. For civilian employees, child support agencies must continue to send the NMSN to the DoD human resource office provided in the new hire and quarterly wage response. The address for the appropriate HR office is included as part of the new hire and quarterly wage response that is sent as an FPLS match.